1: Gorer, J-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

289 of two species of daphne (*ri-kan-too* and *dé-nok*) cooked to a pulp and then spread over coarse canvas on stretchers under flowing water. Paper can be made by anyone, either for monastery use or for sale; but since there are no printing blocks in Zongu books have [212] to be sent away to be stamped. For ordinary writing an ink is made out of black earth.

346 To the front of the monastery is a piece of artificially raised 351 level ground of perhaps fifteen yards depth. It is covered with fairly rough short grass; and at the far edge against the low stone wall are set up a number of prayer flags in memory of the dead, and a few for the benefit of the living. There are one or two small outcrops of rock. All round the building, except in front of the porch, is a narrow flower border in which are grown European flowers, of which seeds or cuttings have been brought from Gangtok—hollyhocks, petunias, sweet william, geraniums, dahlias, and flowering cactuses. In the grass near the wall are several large bushes of small-flowered pink and red roses and some large clumps of hydrangeas. The flowers from these plants are used to decorate the lamaist altar, in preference to the numerous orchids which can be found in the neighbourhood.

Below the monastery wall is a small wood chiefly composed of juniper and *ficus*; about fifty yards from the monastery inside the wood are four *choten* walls—long rectangular stone barrows with stones inscribed with prayers let into the side. The most considerable of these is surmounted by a terra-cotta decoration of a half-moon and three diminishing circles. These *choten* are not funeral 796 piles, nor even cenotaphs; their intention is apotropaic.[6] Some religious ceremonies are performed by the *choten*, particularly those in which both lamas and Mun (the priests of the old Lepcha religion) take part, for the latter are not allowed to officiate within the monastery precincts. The wood is also used as a public latrine [514] during festivals, and animals, particularly pigs and cows, come to pasture there.

351 To the right of the monastery is an ordinary Lepcha house (except that the entrance is on the west instead of the east side) 794 which is normally the home of the monastery custodian who looks after the garden and ground. He has a small garden (*sing*) in front of the house and also one or two little enclosures with

[6] I am employing the term *apotropaic* for all religious actions whose aim is preventative rather than curative. The *choten* are to keep devils away, not to expel those already present.

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Mun to which he was entitled. No neighbouring village is renowned for sodomy which is usually called by the periphrasis *mon-bo taa tyoul*—the effect of eating uncastrated boar. It is a typically Lepcha attitude to view such unethical acts as being out of the control of the aggressor; nobody would willingly or knowingly eat uncastrated pig, and therefore a sodomite who brings, or risks bringing a 'year of disaster' on the community is not responsible for his acts. No disgust is shown for Takneum *youmi*: but people avoid sleeping near him when he is drunk. The Lepchas state specifically that this *tamtoom* does not apply to other races, but only to themselves; other people can eat uncastrated pig without evil results; and if they commit sodomy it is because their habits are different. The eating of wild boars does not carry any such dangers.

Pigs, together with dogs and hens, are scavengers of human excrement; indeed it is necessary to be armed with a stick to drive them away, as these animals will follow people out into the forest; and they are so aggressive that young children are always accompanied by an elder in order to keep the animals away. There is a story of the dog, the pig, and the hen quarrelling over a piece of excrement, the things they say being given in words like their cries. The dog arrives first and says 'I am going to eat this, I am going to eat this.' 'Eu you might share it, eu eu' says the pig. 'Shant, shant' barks the dog. 'All right keep it, all right keep it' clucks the hen and goes away. Afterwards people usually clean themselves with sticks or stones or grass.

Dogs are kept and loved. Hunters will have three or four; other people just one or two. The lamas say that they give away superfluous puppies; other people kill theirs. All the dogs are watch-dogs and keep away wild animals and thieves. They are always fed by their owners. They are not supposed to come into the house; in point of fact they frequently do and are turned out again.

Cats are kept to keep down mice and rats. Whenever chicken is killed the cat is given some of the *cooked* meat. In this way, it is said, they will not kill live chickens. Occasionally if hungry they will kill and eat wild birds.

Fowls are kept both for food and for their eggs. Each hen has its own nest made for it, usually on the balcony. Two or three eggs are always left in the nests and therefore the hens do not go and hide clutches away from the house. Hen's wings are never clipped nor are they enclosed, and they seem, like the other animals,

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it. A baby now made a pool on the floor; nobody took any notice, its mother merely spreading the mess with her bare foot across the boards.

The onlookers now said that the spirit had come, but I was unable to decide, either then or later, whether the Nunjimu was actually in a trance or not. I am inclined to think not, however; but it is probable that the incessant rattle had brought about a semi-hypnotic state. Certainly everyone looked half asleep. After a while she got up from the floor and started to dance, circling slowly round the room. She left her bell on the floor but still continued drumming. It was a slow rhythmic shuffle rather than a dance and reminded me of some aged ballerina trying over the steps of her youth; and failing lamentably. From time to time she turned on her heels and stamped. This caused the floor to shake and the effect was slightly impressive. All the time she went on droning, but her words were almost inaudible. At one moment the spirit was understood to have enquired what presents it was to receive. It said it had come from Nepal and could speak only the language of that country. I listened very intently but could not make out anything even remotely resembling Nepali. Gongyop asked the spirit to converse in Lepcha, at the same time lighting another of the altar lamps to emphasise the fact that this and all the other offerings had been put there in its honour.

The dance continued for about half an hour, and during its progress the Nunjimu gradually made known that the child was being troubled by Cherko Mung. It appeared, however, that its life was in no immediate danger. Tafoor afterwards told me that the cure was easy: it was merely a matter of a Mun making certain sacrifices, coupled with the reading of sacred books by a Lama. Now that the cause of the illness had been definitely established there was no further cause for worry.

The Nunjimu now returned to her former place on the floor. She never once stopped drumming, and now took up her bell again. Gradually the beat became slower and less

2: Morris T-5 (1937)1938 AK5 Lepcha AK5

crops of which only small quantities are required at a time are grown. This also serves as a latrine, and is in consequence much frequented by the pigs and dogs, which here perform the function of scavengers. It sometimes happens that a man's main fields are situated round about his house, but these are generally at a distance and often scattered; for cardamoms, the chief source of wealth of the Lepchas, seem to thrive best in the bottom of the valley, whereas millet and maize may be successfully raised on the almost precipitous hillsides far above the village.

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846 consideration instead of being looked upon as an outcast,
[562] and a source of defilement to others.

It is usual for everybody living in a house where a birth has recently taken place to wash themselves and their clothes, first in hot water inside the house, and afterwards in the nearest stream. The mother generally continues to wash every three days for the first month following the child's birth, and the baby itself is said to be washed each night and morning for a month. This, however, I think is merely
[783 a counsel of perfection and not often observed. I should
514] add that there is amongst the Lepchas no idea of ceremonial uncleanliness, either at this or at any other time; nor have they the common obsession with defecation, which leads Indians to look upon the left hand (with which the body is always cleaned) as itself an unclean thing.

852 During the third-day celebrations the mother will usually wear new or at least freshly-washed clothes. The baby itself will be wrapped in a cloth, the colour of which should be in accordance with its birth-signs. Thus, if it has been
[822] ascertained that the child will become a Lama, for instance, it will be wrapped in a yellow cloth; if a hunter, then in red; if a woman of loose morals, lilac; and so on.

843 As soon as a woman becomes pregnant both she and her husband must take certain precautions, the neglect of which is thought to cause, amongst other things, difficult delivery. During the fifth month of pregnancy it is usual to call in a Mun, who will wave elephant grass over the mother and thus ensure an easy birth.

During the whole time of pregnancy and up to the third day after the birth of the child both the father and mother, should they be making garden fences, must work unassisted. Failure to observe this precaution will cause a difficult delivery.

The father must not take fish out of a trap, or the child will be born with its nose stopped up. Nor must he lock anything up, with the exception of his own private box, or the child will refuse to descend from the womb until such